



## **TIPS FOR REPORTING SUSPICIOUS PERSONS, ACTIVITIES, VEHICLES, ETC. TO PREVENT TERRORISM**

SDPD Neighborhood Policing Resource Team  
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First and foremost, continue to live your daily lives. Terrorism is only successful when it disrupts the lives of the people whose government is targeted. Prepare as you would for any emergency, such as an earthquake, by having a 3- to 5-day supply of water and canned or dried food, blankets, flashlights, matches, and other items that are part of any standard emergency kit. Have a plan for your family or business that includes places where family members or employees should go in various scenarios. Go to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's website, **[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)**, for more information about threats and planning.

Each terrorist attack in history has produced an information trail about the target, the acquisition of material to carry out the attack, i.e., explosives or other weapons, and the movement of money and people. Detecting these signs and reporting information about them to the proper agencies is the best way to prevent a terrorist act.

You should also be vigilant and aware of your surroundings and report anything that doesn't fit in or seems out of the ordinary. Be aware yet fair. Avoid stereotyping and profiling. Some examples of persons, activities, vehicles, etc. that could be considered suspicious are listed below. Some are clearly emergencies. They should be reported immediately by calling **911**. Others may be considered as non-emergencies. They should be reported to the SDPD at **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. It will notify and coordinate actions with the FBI and other government agencies. When a terrorist act appears imminent you should also notify any law enforcement or security personnel that are in the immediate area. If there is any doubt as to whether the situation is an emergency it is always better to be on the safe side and call **911**.

The ability of the SDPD and other law enforcement agencies to locate and arrest potential terrorists will depend on the thoroughness and accuracy of the report you submit. The following information checklist should be used for reporting both emergencies and non-emergencies:

- Type of activity
- Location: exact street address and nearest cross street
- Time of activity
- Weapons involved
- Vehicle information: type, license number, color, year, make, model, unusual characteristics (e.g., dents, bumper stickers), number of persons, etc.
- Suspect information: race, gender, age, height, weight, hair color, hair length and style, eye color, facial hair, clothing type and color, other characteristics (e.g., tattoos, missing teeth, scars, glasses), etc.

## **EMERGENCIES. CALL 911**

Emergencies include crimes that are in progress or about to happen, and ones that have resulted in serious personal injury, property damage, or property loss. They also include situations in which the suspect may still be at the scene and various kinds of suspicious activities. By calling **911** you will be linked to the appropriate police as well as fire fighting, medical, and ambulance services. You don't need money to call **911** from a pay phone.

When reporting an emergency be prepared to give an accurate description of what your emergency is and your location, especially if you are calling from a mobile cellular phone. Even if you have an E911-ready cell phone that provides location information based on a Global Positioning System (GPS) and your phone has been activated to work in that capacity, the emergency response will be faster if you provide your location. Otherwise the dispatcher can determine the street address and apartment or condo unit only if you are calling from a landline. Thus, if a landline is available it is always better to use it instead of a cell phone. If you are calling from a gated community or a controlled-access building, be sure to give the dispatcher the gate or door access code. Answer the dispatcher's questions about the emergency and don't hang up until you are told. With just the address, if the line is disconnected or you cannot speak, an officer will still be dispatched. The following are considered emergencies for reporting purposes.

Persons doing the following:

- Sketching, taking notes, drawing maps or diagrams, photographing, videotaping, or otherwise monitoring facilities not normally associated with tourist activity or other places that may be targets for terrorist attacks, e.g., key government facilities, airports, bridges, chemical plants, power plants, schools, religious institutions, shopping centers, etc.
- Collecting detailed information on facility entrances, exits, driveways, parking spaces, etc.
- Using binoculars, high-magnification lenses, or night-vision or thermal-imaging devices in observing a facility or activity that may be a target
- Attempting to obtain information about a person, place, operation, or event that may be a target
- Attempting to improperly acquire explosives, detonators, timers, weapons, ammunition, body armor, propane bottles or tanks, etc.
- Attempting to buy large amounts of high-nitrate fertilizers or other unusual chemicals
- Loading vehicles with weapons or explosives
- Attempting to improperly acquire official uniforms, passes, badges, IDs, license plates, vehicles, etc.
- Seeking treatment for chemical burns or missing hands/fingers
- Having untreated chemical burns or missing hands/fingers

Objects in the open, or in vehicles or buildings having the following characteristics may be bombs:

- Unattended bags, backpacks, boxes, etc. near places that may be targets
- Having antennas, batteries, timers, capped pipes, etc.
- Emitting a strong chemical odor

Vehicle fires may indicate a failed or misfired explosive device in the following situations:

- The vehicle is parked near a critical infrastructure facility, government building or office, transportation node, or in an area of high pedestrian traffic
- A vehicle occupant is seen fleeing the scene or behaving suspiciously before the fire occurs
- The fire is in the passenger compartment or trunk instead of the engine compartment
- Sparking, flashing, or popping sounds come from the vehicle
- Unusual odors come from the vehicle

Persons, not just adult males, with several of the following characteristics may be suicide bombers carrying bombs.

- Are nervous, sweating, or mumbling
- Are wearing loose or bulky clothing that is inappropriate for the current weather conditions
- Are wearing an inordinate amount of perfume, cologne, or other scents that may be used to mask chemical odors
- Do not look like they belong in the uniform or dress they are wearing, which may be a disguise to elude detection
- Are carrying or wearing heavy objects
- Holding a bag or package close to his or her body
- Are repeatedly patting upper body or adjusting clothing
- Keeping one or both hands in pockets or close to his or her body, possible holding a detonator switch
- Having visible wires or an explosive belt protruding from under his or her clothing
- Having bulges or padding around the midsection
- Appearing well-groomed but wear sloppy clothing
- Having a pale face from recently shaving a beard
- Not responding to direct salutations or authoritative commands
- Walking in a deliberate, stiff, or awkward manner
- Acting in an unusually vigilant manner
- Having a blank facial expression, or appearing extremely focused or in a trance
- Exhibiting unusually calm and detached behavior

Letters or packages that contain a bomb or a chemical, biological, or radiological (CBR) threat may have one or more of the following characteristics. Handle them with great care. Don't shake, bump, smell, or open them. Put the letter or package down carefully and leave the area. Do not open windows. Call **911** from a landline phone if one is available outside the area. Otherwise it is OK to use a cell phone or pager. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water if you touched the letter or package.

- Are unexpected or from someone you don't know
- Are addressed to someone now longer at your address
- Have no return address or one that does not appear legitimate
- Are bulky, lumpy, or lopsided in appearance
- Have wires or other unusual contents that are protruding or can be felt through the envelope or wrapping
- Are sealed with excessive amounts of tape or string
- Have restrictive markings such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- Have excessive postage
- Emit a strange odor
- Are mailed from a foreign country
- Do not have a named addressee, e.g., are addressed to a title only
- Have incorrect title or misspelled words in the address
- Have oily stains, discolorations, or crystallization on the wrapper

For additional information see the U.S. Postal Inspection Service *Guide to Mail Center Security* at <http://about.usps.com/publications/pub166.pdf>.

If a suspicious object is found outside, get away from it after reporting it. 300 yards is a minimum distance. Then take cover for protection against bomb fragments. Get on the ground if no cover is available. Maintain distance and cover, or leave the area after an explosion. Be alert and cautious in reentering the area to help victims. There may be another device nearby.

## **NON-EMERGENCIES. CALL SDPD AT (619) 531-2000 OR (858) 484-3154**

Non-emergencies are crimes and suspicious activities are ones in which: (a) there is no serious personal injury, property damage, or property loss; (b) the suspect has left the scene or is not likely to return; and (c) an immediate response is not needed. The following are considered non-emergencies for reporting purposes.

- Persons or activities that do not appear to belong in the workplace, neighborhood, business establishment, or near a key facility or event because of their demeanor, behavior, language, dress, activity, etc.
- Multiple sighting of the same suspicious persons, vehicles, or activities at the same location
- Rental of storage units for suspicious items or activities
- Deliveries of chemicals directly to self-storage units
- Unusual deliveries of chemicals to residences or rural addresses
- Street people not previously seen in the area, i.e., panhandlers, shoe shiners, food or flower vendors, newsagents, street sweepers, etc.

Persons doing the following:

- Sitting in a parked vehicle for an extended period of time
- Loitering in public places, e.g., bus stops and train stations
- Loitering near or wandering around a possible target
- Carrying on long conversations on pay or cellular phones near a possible target
- Wearing military or other uniforms that don't appear to belong in them
- Observing security measures or personnel, entry points, access controls, and perimeter barriers such as fences or walls, at a possible target
- Testing or probing security measures, e.g., by driving by a sensitive area, attempting to enter a sensitive area, inquiring about security measures, attempting to smuggle contraband through check points, asking for directions, claiming to be lost, etc.
- Attempting to enter a key facility without proper ID, prior notification and approval, etc.
- Being in a key facility without required visible ID
- Staring or quickly looking away from personnel or vehicles entering or leaving a key facility or parking area
- Carrying heavy bags or backpacks near a possible target
- Setting down bags or backpacks near a possible target and then walking away
- Behaving as if they may be planning a terrorist act, e.g., by mapping routes, timing traffic lights or traffic flow, playing out scenarios, monitoring key facilities or events, etc.
- Observing activities and movements of police personnel, e.g., in and out of a police station.
- Possessing or distributing literature that promotes jihad, racist activities, or terrorist/extremist agendas.
- Seeking donations for obscure charities. You can check on whether a charity is registered as a nonprofit with the IRS at [www.irs.gov/app/pub-78](http://www.irs.gov/app/pub-78).

Vehicles that:

- Are parked near a key facility for an unusual period of time
- Are commonly used for deliveries, e.g., trucks, vans, or U-Hauls, that are parked in locations not usually used for deliveries without prior authorization
- Are out of place in the environment, e.g., a tractor-trailer parked in a residential neighborhood, and may have out-of-state or temporary plates
- Are abandoned
- Are overloaded
- Are leaking a fluid

- Have been modified to handle heavier than normal loads, additional storage space, or increased fuel capacity
- Have excessively darkened or tinted windows, or temporary window coverings to prevent viewing of the vehicle's interior
- Show signs of theft, e.g., damaged locks, missing windows, etc.
- Bear a temporary commercial placard affixed with tape or magnets, or a permanent placard that is unusual, unrecognizable, or has misspelled words
- Contain batteries, wiring, timers, other power supply or switching components, unmarked packages or unusual items such as PVC pipe, magnets, compressed gas cylinders, fire extinguishers, etc. in the passenger compartment
- Contain blueprints, maps, sketching materials, or surveillance equipment, e.g., binoculars, video cameras, high-magnification lenses, etc. in the passenger compartment

## **POTENTIAL INDICATORS AND REACTIONS**

Some examples of suspicious behaviors, activities to report, and other things you should do to help prevent terrorism can be found in the iWATCH section of the Los Angeles Police Department's website at [www.lapdonline.org/iwatchla/content\\_basic\\_view/42535](http://www.lapdonline.org/iwatchla/content_basic_view/42535) for terrorist activities relating to the following: bulk fuel distributors, construction sites, dive/boat stores, farm supply stores, financial institutions, general aviation airports, hobby shops, home improvement and large retail stores, hotels and motels, peroxide-based explosives, rental cars, rental properties, rental trucks, shopping malls and centers, and storage facilities.